

CHRISTIAN THOUGHTFULNESS.

The other day a little book came to me through the mail. I recognized the hand that wrote the address. It was from my friend and fellow minister whom I love. The next mail brought this letter: "The little book I send under separate cover, if you have not already seen it, will give you pleasant and profitable reading for thirty minutes. I enclose postage for return when you have read it at your convenience." That was just like him. Who ever heard of such thoughtfulness? It was enough to have thought of me and thought of sending the book, but he even thought of the postage. Well, I settled myself down to enjoy that little book. It was "Foot-Steps in a Parish," by John Timothy Stone. Dr. John Timothy Stone succeeded Dr. Malbie D. Babcock as pastor of the Brown Memorial church in Baltimore. This booklet tells of some of Dr. Babcock's foot-prints which Dr. Stone ran across again and again in his pastoral work. It is a splendid tribute to Dr. Babcock. I should say that it did give "pleasant and profitable reading for thirty minutes." It brought new inspiration that will make me want to be a better preacher and pastor all the rest of my life. Dr. Babcock was a wonderful man. How winsome, how spiritual, how inspiring!

Apart from the good the book did me, the thoughtfulness of my friend helped me too. He has left me wishing that I could think of nice things like that. Moreover, I note on the fly leaf in the back of the book a little system of book keeping that leads me to believe that I am the twenty-third minister who has been treated in this same thoughtful way. That means that twenty-three ministers are going to be better preachers and pastors because of the thoughtfulness of this one man. He has started influences that he could not stop if he would. They will probably reach to eternity itself.

"Oh, the good we all may do,
While the days are going by."

W. L. L.

OUR LITTLE STRUGGLING WESTERN CHURCHES.

A little more than a year ago, a letter from Selma, Ala., contained a great many questions about the Rev. W. P. N., wanting to know his age, height, breadth of shoulders, distance between the eyes, tone of voice, etc. They were canvassing his qualifications, with a view to a call to the pastorate. I answered the letter, by saying that he would probably fill their bill perfectly; but that he was doing a good and important work which it would be a sin, not to say a crime, to break up. Moreover, that, until recently, they had had all the Seminaries on that side of the Mississippi river, and they had allowed no young man of promise to come west at all, if they could possibly prevent it. And then continued: "Now turn your eyes to the rising sun, and get you a pastor over there; and let these poor, little, struggling, western

churches alone." The idea conveyed by these words had taken complete possession of my mind, and given it a pessimistic tinge with regard to the outlook for Presbyterianism in Texas.

But since the beginning of the present year, I have traveled extensively through the region occupied by our churches, attended their preaching services, Sunday schools, and prayer meetings, and visited among their members. I reached the town of S— about ten o'clock Saturday night. Sunday morning, after breakfast at the hotel, I inquired for the Presbyterian church. Out of a dozen men standing around, men who lived there, not one could tell me where the church was, nor, indeed, whether there was such an one there. After a good long search, I found the church, hunted up the pastor, and told him of my trouble. I then told him of my letter to the Selma, Ala., man and made an ad hominem application of it. I said: "You have gotten the idea that you represent one of these poor, little, struggling, western churches, and it has taken such complete possession of you that you are afraid to hold up your head and assert yourself. Change your gait, put on an aggressive front, and make yourself heard and felt. There is never any difficulty in finding a Campbellite, a Methodist or a Baptist church. Everybody knows where they are from the start." I then felt sure that my characterization was correct. But I went on to the next town where I found the situation changed. A live, active pastor ministered to a live, active, working church. I went as far west as Toyah, eighteen miles west of the Pecos river, up through Carlsbad and Roswell, New Mexico, and through the Pan Handle region home. What I saw gave me a new outlook, and a courage to go forward. At Amarillo Rev. Mr. Ivey ministers to a church, not very large, indeed, but in good working condition. The morning that I was with them, the question of more commodious quarters was up for consideration. They had either to build a larger house of worship or enlarge the one they were in. It being decided to enlarge the old one, a call was made for seven hundred dollars, the amount thought necessary to do the work. In a few minutes, perhaps not more than fifteen, the money was in sight. Remember, none of these churches are rich, and but few of their members have any considerable amount of money or property; but, like the inhabitants of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's day, the people had a mind to work. At Childress, where Bro. Hall had a little band, he had gone to work with a will and in the first three months of his pastorate his congregation had grown to respectable proportions, nineteen members had been added to his roll, and every one wore on his face a hopeful smile. And so on all the rest of my way.

Starting out again in September through the Churches in the southern part of the State, though none of the Churches are very large, with the exception of those in Houston, Galveston, San Antonio and Austin, all seem to be in earnest and accomplishing good results.

One church in Houston had established five mission stations, and today, I am informed, has added two more to the list. At Navasota I was somewhat anxious, because I had an idea that the pastor, whom I knew and esteemed very highly, was not exactly popular. It chanced that I fell in with a man who did not like him, and from him I got an unfavorable account. But, Sunday morning, I went to his Sunday school, and found the house filled with pupils varying in age from six years old to sixty. At the preaching service the auditorium was comfortably filled, and the Westminster League was attended by about thirty, supposedly from eighteen to twenty-five years old each taking an active part in the exercises, and I said to myself, "What a training school he has here for church work." I concluded that he might not be popular, but that some body was doing a good work there. And so it has been where I have gone.

These poor, little, struggling, western churches are no longer such in any disreputable sense. They are a live, active force, doing the Lord's work. I am no longer a pessimist, but an optimist of the first rank. Henceforth, my battle cry is "The Lord is in his holy temple, and will surely accomplish all his holy will."

Let the church arise in her might, put on her armor and go forward, "Conquering and to conquer."

W. Y. C.

CHAT WITH MOTHERS.

And there are so many with needs so different. Some careless and superficial, some foolish and ignorant; a comparatively few wise, living near the standard of ideal motherhood. But whether included in the classes mentioned or outside, there are busy, tired mothers, bearing the heat and burden of the day, to which is often added, alas! a heavy weight upon the heart. It is to these loyal, at times discouraged, women I would speak a word of comfort, and I hope, relief.

"It is so easy to advise," they may reply, "you who are at a distance and cannot understand my needs. My cares and grievances, if they exist, are wholly my own, unlike other people's."

But, dear mother, you are mistaken, although you may not see it. You are perhaps right in claiming your burden, whatever it may be, as distinctly your own, but it is a part of the common lot as well; no person is so separated from the human family as to be beyond the sympathetic appreciation of their kind, and although ills differ in variety, the "touch of nature makes the whole world kin." Weary, perhaps weak, you are weaving for your future a crown, and upon you depends whether it be of jewels or thorns. The daily trifles which seem so worthless of consideration today are growing into habits of immeasurable force tomorrow.

The word consideration seems to me a good one, involving, as it does, possibly a life of pain and misery for somebody.—Ellen Woods Coombs, in The New York Observer.